

Colonel PETER MacKESSACK, *D.S.O.*, *M.B.*, *B.Sc.*

In Bournemouth on December 9, 1949, Colonel Peter MacKessack. Born in Kinloss, Aberdeen, August 4, 1872, he took the *B.Sc.* Aberdeen, in 1892 and the *M.B.* Aberdeen, in 1896, and was appointed Surgeon Lieutenant July 28, 1897. Promoted Captain *R.A.M.C.* July 28, 1900, Major January 28, 1909, and Lieutenant-Colonel March 1, 1915, he retired with the rank of Colonel July 28, 1921. He took the *D.P.H.* Cambridge, in 1907. He served on the Nile in 1898, being awarded the Medal and Egyptian Medal. He was in France from August 1914 till March 1915, in Gallipoli from July to September 1915, and on the Macedonian Front from October 1915 till May 1919. Twice mentioned in despatches, he was awarded the *D.S.O.*, the 1914 Star, British War and Victory Medals.

Correspondence

DEAR SIR,

In his paper entitled "Principles of Surgery in the Field, Including Transfusion" published in the September number of the *Journal*, Brigadier Fettes, in the second paragraph of the section on Transfusion (p. 113), argues that dried plasma is the best solution to the problem of blood transfusion in forward areas on active service.

In the conditions which will obtain in future wars this may well be the case and indeed, in certain campaigns in World War II, dried plasma was the only transfusion fluid which could be supplied to front-line units. Nevertheless I think it would be wrong to accept this as a principle which has universal application. At first sight it might have been assumed that the difficult conditions which prevailed in the Western Desert and later on the Western Front in Europe would make it impossible to provide whole blood for use in the forward areas. Yet, by the persistence and ingenuity of the Blood Transfusion Service, these difficulties were overcome. Blood was freely available throughout the Western Desert campaigns and was administered in the beach units on D-Day. "Delivery on the doorstep" was the slogan in Normandy, Belgium and Germany and rarely was this unfulfilled.

It is not my intention to enter into an argument on the respective merits of whole blood and plasma and I will merely record that, whatever the theoretical position may be, no doubt existed in the minds of surgeons and blood-transfusion officers in the forward area as to the superiority of whole blood over plasma.

While it is true, as Brigadier Fettes says, that reactions are more common with stored blood than with fresh, they were, in our experience, few and far between and the ill-effects they caused were many times outbalanced by the benefit derived from the blood.

My object in writing this letter is to emphasize the fact that whole blood can be supplied even under very difficult conditions and that every effort should be made to do so before deciding that plasma alone can be provided.

Yours faithfully,
J. S. K. Boyd.

*The Wellcome Laboratories
of Tropical Medicine.*

Notices

THE OFFICES OF THE JOURNAL

AFTER January 1, 1950, the Journal will be edited and managed from the Royal Army Medical College and it will be essential for changes of address, rank and decorations to be notified to the Manager as they occur.

Will all subscribers, therefore, whose rank, decorations or address require amendment complete the enclosed form?

The Manager,
Journal of the R.A.M.C.,
Royal Army Medical College,
Millbank,
London, S.W.1.

Kindly amend my particulars to read as follows:

Name, rank and decorations.....

Address

Date..... Signature.....

Reviews

FITNESS FOR GAMES. By F. A. Hornibrook. London: Research Books Ltd. 1949. Pp. 39. Price 2s. 6d.

The author's intention in this pamphlet is to help adolescents who are keen on games and lack the advice of a trainer. The text and layout are appropriate to the intended readers. The advice offered is well tried and sound, although some of the specific treatments suggested are of doubtful value.

For the enthusiastic it is hardly full enough, but the average lad would benefit greatly if he could integrate his reading of the book with the practice of what he has read.

J. M. M.